

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Sub A 5 A method and apparatus are described establishing multimedia communications on a shared communications channel. A first a second communication unit, such as a master and slave unit establish a synchronous communications link. Additional synchronous communications links may be established. A first data packet associated with the synchronous communication link is communicated to the second communication unit by including an address. Time slots reserved for the synchronous channel by the first unit are separated by a fixed time interval. One or more additional communications units may 10 communicate over an asynchronous link established between the master and additional units using remaining time slots. Data packets may be communicated to additional units by including addresses associated with each additional units. The synchronous link may be interrupted with the asynchronous link by communicating an asynchronous data packet on a time slot reserved for the synchronous communications link. The asynchronous link may be a Time- 15 Division duplex link for alternately transmitting and receiving on different ones of the remaining time slots. Asynchronous data packets communicated to additional units on remaining time slots. The master unit may poll each additional units for a response packet to the asynchronous data packet. On a Time-Division duplex 20 link, additional units alternately receive the poll from the first communication unit and transmit the response packet on different ones of the remaining time slots.